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Bangalore Mirror

TEMP Max 35 | ...y 70% Partly cloudy sky | Sensex 77,844 | Nifty 24,326 | Gold 1,53,000 | Silver 2,70,000 | Dollar 94.25 | Euro 110.88 | GBP 128.85

CITY PAGE 2

Mom's the word Any guesses on what Bengalureans are planning on gifting their mothers this Mother's Day? Clue: It can't be bought, but is priceless...

Fang attack As natural habitats shrink, snakes are cornered resulting in more scary encounters — State has already recorded nearly 4,259 snakebite cases till April 26

CITY PAGE 6

Police and Customs cases reveal hydroponic ganja brought in from countries where it is legal to grow it is fast becoming trending narcotic in city — seizures of the contraband in just four months this year have reached almost the total amount seized last year

GRASS IS NOT GREENER ON EITHER SIDE

3 persons ferrying this drug caught at airport earlier this week

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Smuggling and circulation of hydroponic ganja is increasing with anti-narcotics officials identifying the drug as one of the most commonly trafficked substances entering the city from foreign countries such as Thailand. In the latest case, Bengaluru Customs officials seized 12.96 kg of hydroponic ganja worth ₹4.53 crore from three passengers arriving from Bangkok at Kempegowda International Airport on May 6. City police officials said 38.039 kg of hydroponic ganja worth ₹29.64 crore has been seized till May 3 this year.

Nandini Layout police recently nabbed two interstate accused and seized 5.7 kg of hydroponic ganja from them. Police said the duo had procured the contraband from abroad and were attempting to sell it in the city.

On April 29, 2026, the Central Crime Branch (CCB) and local police arrested 16 people in a major

CONTINUED ON PAGE 8 »

"These drugs are smuggled into Bengaluru through international carriers and courier networks, often in large quantities. The major challenge is that while these substances may be legal in the country of origin, they become illegal once brought into India

—Raja Imam Kasim P, DCP (crime II)

B'luru firmly hitched onto EV bandwagon

Despite state's tax-free status for electric vehicles having ended on April 1, demand remains on all-time high

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Electric vehicle sales in Bengaluru have remained high in April, despite even budget EVs becoming more expensive in Karnataka.

Although the state's tax-free status for EVs ended on April 1, demand for new EVs has not subsided.

Following an astronomical surge in registrations in March, the sale of battery-powered vehicles has remained high even in April, with only a marginal drop when compared with March sales.

Total registration of pure EVs in Bengaluru stood at 10,272 units in April, down from 11,212 units in March, according to Vahan dashboard.

This is also much higher compared to the sale of pure electric vehicles in April last year, when 4,735 new units were registered across the city.

Karnataka implemented the Motor Vehicle Taxation (Amendment) Bill on April 1, introducing a lifetime tax on electric cars based on their price at registration. Under the revised structure, EVs priced up to ₹10 lakh attract a 5% tax, those between ₹10 lakh and ₹25 lakh are taxed at 8%,

CONTINUED ON PAGE 4 »

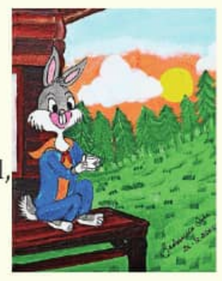
THINGS TO DO

01 Music and chill

Rudraksha Live Entertainment Pvt Ltd presents Jazbaa, a concert featuring Vishal and Rekha Bhardwaj — a powerhouse duo in Indian music and cinema, known for their deeply moving collaborations and individual brilliance. **Where: Phoenix Marketcity; When: May 30, 7 pm**

02 Blast from the past

Magical World, an exhibition featuring a vibrant collection of artworks by Badrunissa Irfan, brings alive the magic of childhood and the warmth of simple moments through playful, hand-painted characters and scenes. **Where: Sublime Gallery, UB City; When: Until May 30**



03 Game day extravaganza

Loco Lane transforms match-day into a premium fan sanctuary, offering all-inclusive IPL screenings with gourmet dining and the comfort of premium box seating for an elevated experience. **Where: Loco Lane, Ashok Nagar; When: Until May 31, 5 pm**

04 Between the lines

Atta Galatta is presenting Rise in Love, an intimate book preview evening by Archana and Asad, born from personal unravelling, shifting relationships and familiar patterns that often go unspoken. **Where: Atta Galatta, Indiranagar; When: May 9, 4 pm**

05 Weekend vibes

The Oterra Hotel is hosting a Kids Carnival Brunch, bringing a vibrant world of cartoon legends and superhero adventures. While parents enjoy a premium spread, children can dive into interactive games, live performances and more. **Where: The Oterra Hotel, 24@43, Electronic City; When: Every Sunday until May 31**

B'lureans to give moms a 'day off' this Sunday

Beyond gifts and flashy displays, more people are moving towards personal approach to Mother's Day celebrations, choosing experiences that allow mothers to participate without any responsibilities

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For most working Bengalureans, Sunday means a much-needed break but rarely for mothers, who often continue juggling cooking, cleaning and caring responsibilities. This Mother's Day, however, many families in the city are planning to change that. Moving away from flashy celebrations and expensive gifts, Bengalureans are choosing to give mothers something far more meaningful: a genuine day off.

From quiet breakfast spreads at home to carefully planned day outings and "no-decision Sundays," Bengalureans are embracing what global lifestyle experts are calling "the great unburdening," a growing movement centred on reducing a mother's mental load and allowing her to simply relax.

Unlike previous years, where celebrations often revolve around crowded brunches or hurried restaurant bookings, many households in the city are now planning low-stress, deeply personal experiences. In neighbourhoods, a few report a rise in advance orders for artisanal pastries, gourmet coffee kits and curated breakfast hampers meant for slow mornings at home.

There has been a shift toward deliberately slower, intimate celebrations, emphasising meaningful connections

"For once, I don't want my mother coordinating the day or deciding where everyone should go. We have planned everything already; breakfast, a short garden visit and dinner. Her only job is to rest," said 32-year-old software engineer Nikita Rao from HSR Layout. The idea of a "decision-free" Mother's Day appears to be resonating strongly with younger Bengaluru families, especially among working professionals balancing hectic schedules. Many are choosing experiences that allow mothers to participate without taking charge. Guided pottery sessions, flower arrangement workshops, spa therapies and calming sound-healing experiences are witnessing increased interest this weekend.

Hospitality businesses in the city say the trend reflects changing attitudes toward caregiving and emotional labour within families. "People are no longer looking for extravagant celebrations alone. Customers are asking for complete experiences; breakfast deliveries, pre-set décor, even cleanup services because they want mothers to feel genuinely cared for," said Priya M, manager of a boutique.

Restaurants, too, are adapting to this shift. Several eateries across Bengaluru are offering "no-cook dinner" packages that include chef-prepared meals delivered home with disposable eco-friendly table setups to eliminate the hassle of cleaning up after dinner.

Some families are even hiring private chefs for intimate gatherings, preferring meaningful time together over large social outings and celebrations.

For homemaker Vibha Krishnamurthy, the change feels refreshing. "Usually, Mother's Day still means extra work because guests come home or we go out and plan everything. This year my daughters have taken over the kitchen and told me not to enter. That itself feels like the best gift," she said with a laugh.

Growing movement centres on reducing mothers' mental load and allowing them to simply relax, with many opting for low-stress, thoughtfully curated experiences, reflecting changing attitudes towards caregiving

Mental wellness experts note that the trend reflects a broader post-pandemic reassessment of family time and priorities.

In a city long associated with its fast-paced work culture and long commutes, many residents are now deliberately opting for slower, more intimate celebrations. These gatherings place emphasis on emotional comfort and meaningful connection rather than spectacle, underscoring a shift in how people value their time and relationships.

Layla, The Den B'luru to host Mother's Day Drunch on May 10

Layla, The Den Bengaluru will host a Mother's Day Drunch on May 10. The Mother's Day Drunch is a leisurely, generous affair. The table draws from across the world, a fungi egg station that speaks to the finer instincts of the brunch hour, a fresh pasta wheel turned to order, a gourmet chaat bar that nods warmly to home and a waffle station that rounds the afternoon with quiet indulgence. Bottomless pours run through it all, easy and well-chosen, as any proper Sunday afternoon rightfully demands. **— BMB**

347 govt high schools to get modern science labs

Encouraged by the SSLC examination results, the state government has decided to strengthen infrastructure in government high schools by introducing well-equipped science laboratories for students. From the 2026-27 academic year, modern laboratories will be established in 347 government high schools across the state at an estimated cost of Rs 3.47 crore under the Samagra Shikshana Karnataka programme.

Officials said that this initiative is aimed particularly at schools with enrolment of up to 200 students, including institutions in rural areas, where access to practical science learning facilities remains limited. The government plans to provide modern equipment and laboratory infrastructure to help students gain hands-on learning experience in Physics, Chemistry and Biology. Officials believe that alongside classroom teaching, practical exposure through laboratory experiments will help students understand scientific concepts more effectively and develop a scientific temperament. The project is also expected to revive interest in government schools that have been struggling due to inadequate infrastructure and increasing competition from private institutions. **— BMB**

KAS interview process begins amid controversy

The Karnataka Public Service Commission (KPSC) has commenced the interview process for candidates shortlisted from the KAS mains examination. KPSC Secretary K Jyothi said the interview process would continue as per the already announced schedule and standard operating procedures. The Commission has scheduled personality tests and verification of original documents till June 10 for recruitment to 384 Group 'A' and Group 'B' KAS posts for 2023-24. A total of 1,158 candidates have been shortlisted for interviews in a 1:3 ratio from the main examination. In addition, the Commission has also decided to conduct interviews for six High Court-related candidates in compliance with court directions.

Meanwhile, the interview process has sparked controversy after it emerged that the daughter of a sitting KPSC member has qualified for the personality test. As per rules, members are required to disclose in advance if a relative is appearing for the interview process and must recuse themselves from the interview board on the candidate's scheduled date. Officials said the member had already informed the Commission on April 27 that he would not participate in the interview process on the day of his daughter's interview and for three days prior to it. The KPSC legal cell has reportedly clarified that the member need only stay away from the interview board before which his daughter appears and may participate in other interview panels. KPSC Secretary K Jyothi maintained that the process was being conducted transparently and in accordance with the rules. **— BMB**

CRIME FILES

Patient's jewellery stolen from hospital after surgery

A nurse has allegedly stolen gold and silver ornaments worth Rs 9.7 lakh from a patient at a private hospital on Hennur–Bagaluru Main Road.

According to the complaint, a 42-year-old man had admitted his wife for surgery on May 2. Before the procedure, nursing staff removed her jewellery, including a 65-gram mangalya chain, 10-gram anklets, and 9-gram gold earrings, and stored them in a bag inside the ward's wardrobe.

After the surgery, the couple discovered the ornaments missing. Out of panic, the husband alerted the hospital management to probe further and later approached Hennur police. Investigations revealed that the newly recruited nurse was behind the theft.

Police said efforts are underway to recover the stolen ornaments and further investigation is in progress. **–BMB**

Man arrested for harassment, assault on neighbours

A 40-year-old man was arrested for allegedly molesting his neighbour and later attacking her and her husband with a machete during a confrontation in the Shankarapura Police Station limits.

Police arrested the accused, identified as Puttaraju, a driver, residing on Rangarao Road, in connection with the assault and alleged sexual harassment of a woman. According to police, Nandish and his wife, who work as security guards in a building, were living next door to Puttaraju and his family. The incident reportedly occurred when Nandish's wife was washing utensils near the house. Police said Puttaraju allegedly came from behind, hugged her and behaved inappropriately.

On noticing the incident, Nandish confronted the accused with a machete and questioned his behaviour. During the altercation, the accused allegedly hit the woman with a dosa pan before snatching the machete from Nandish and attacking him. Nandish sustained injuries and was admitted to a hospital. The accused has been taken into custody and further probe is underway. **–BMB**

Police denies torture in suspect's death

A 45-year-old murder accused died while in the custody of the Mahalakshmi Layout Police Station after reportedly suffering from serious health complications, police said.

The deceased, identified as Manjunath, had been arrested on April 28 in connection with the murder of a woman who was found dead at her residence. According to police officials, Manjunath complained of severe stomach pain on May 1, while in custody. He was initially admitted to a nearby hospital for treatment.

As his health condition deteriorated, doctors shifted him to Victoria Hospital for advanced medical care. Medical authorities reportedly informed the police that Manjunath was suffering from pancreatic complications, liver-related ailments and diabetes.

Despite treatment, he died on May 3. Police officials denied any allegations of custodial torture or wrongdoing, stating that the accused died due to pre-existing medical conditions and illness.

Following the incident, an Unnatural Death Report (UDR) has been registered as per procedure. Senior police officers said further investigation will depend on the post-mortem report, which is awaited. Authorities are expected to closely examine the circumstances leading to his death. **–BMB**

Woman attacked by ex-husband, bystanders intervene

In a video posted on social media platform X, a masked man was seen arriving on a scooty with a knife and allegedly attempting to attack a woman during afternoon hours in Madanayakanahalli. Witnessing the attack, nearby members of the public rushed to rescue the woman, restraining the masked man and pulling her away from him. During the chaos, some locals were also seen physically assaulting the accused. It was later found that the attacker was the victim's ex-husband. The Madanayakanahalli police have initiated a probe into the matter. **–BMB**

Woman's 3.5-hour long commute goes viral

Bengaluru's traffic woes were once again in the spotlight after an Instagram user posted a reel claiming it took her nearly three and a half hours to travel from Bellandur to Kempegowda International Airport.

She mentioned that traffic was at a standstill across several junctions during peak hours, recounting how she left her residence at 6 pm and reached the airport only at 9.30 pm on Tuesday.

The reel has since gone viral, drawing widespread reactions online. Many users voiced concern that Bengaluru's traffic situation has deteriorated further, particularly during rainy evenings and peak office hours. **–BMB**

HC says single mother's sign enough for passport

The Karnataka High Court has held that passport authorities cannot insist on obtaining a father's consent for issuing or renewing the passport of a minor child when the mother has been granted exclusive custody.

The case arose after a divorced woman approached the court challenging the refusal of passport officials to process her child's passport application without the father's signature.

Allowing the petition, the High Court stated that once exclusive custody is granted to one parent, passport authorities cannot impose conditions beyond those prescribed under statutory rules. **–BMB**

10,272 units registered in April

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

and vehicles above ₹25 lakh are taxed at 10%.

This marked a rollback of earlier incentives, as most EVs in the state previously enjoyed zero lifetime road tax, with only those above ₹25 lakh subject to a 10% levy. While EVs remain cheaper to register than conventional fossil-fuel vehicles, the cost advantage, after the new policy, has narrowed significantly.

"Demand for electric vehicles (EVs) is becoming more consistent, reflecting a structural shift in consumer preferences. This trend is driven by rising fuel prices and improvements in EV infrastructure. Although range anxiety still exists, EVs are increasingly emerging as a preferred option for city commuting. Additionally, a segment of buyers is motivated by environmental concerns and the desire to reduce their carbon footprint," said a city-based mobility expert.

However, experts opine that private cars, whether battery-operated or fossil fuel-based, need to be discouraged as they do not encourage the sustainable urban mobility agenda.

— BMB

Lake revival faces setback amid illegal waste dumping

Residents accuse waste dumpers of undoing restoration efforts, as incomplete barriers and weak surveillance threaten Kithagnur Lake's revival project

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Locals demand cameras, guards and tighter enforcement after garbage and debris allegedly reappeared around the partially restored waterbody despite ongoing rehabilitation works

Despite repeated clean-up drives and ongoing development works, Kithagnur Lake is once again facing the problem of illegal dumping, raising concerns among residents who had hoped for a cleaner and better-maintained waterbody.

Locals say that, after extensive efforts over the past year, including desilting, removal of debris, and partial restoration work, the lake has started to show signs of recovery. Fencing was also installed around the lake perimeter as part of the development plan. However, residents now allege that gaps in the fencing and lack of monitoring have allowed miscreants to reenter the premises and dump garbage and construction waste.

According to community members, the lake restoration project is still ongoing, and approximately 50–60% of the work has been completed. The work reportedly included removal of accumulated silt, clearing of solid waste, and partial boundary protection to prevent further encroachment. Despite this, locals claim that some sections of the fencing remain open, making the area vulnerable to repeated misuse.

Over the past few days, a resident pointed out that he had shared details of a vehicle allegedly involved in dumping waste inside the lake premises within local groups, urging authorities to take immediate action. Many have expressed frustration that, despite collective efforts to keep the lake clean, a few irresponsible individuals continue to damage the ecosystem.

Residents are now demanding stricter preventive measures, including complete fencing of the lake boundary, installation of CCTV cameras, and deployment of security personnel to monitor illegal activity. They argue that, without consistent surveillance, the restoration work risks being undone repeatedly.

A local panchayat official, responding to concerns, stated that the fencing work is largely complete, but certain sections could not be closed due to technical requirements related to drainage and sewage diversion.

The official said, "There are certain sections where fencing cannot be done because there will be drainage for sewage diversion. Most of the fencing is complete, and the lake work is still under progress."

The lake development plan included phased restoration work such as desilting, bund strengthening, and boundary protection, aimed at reviving the waterbody while maintaining the necessary civic infrastructure flow. Despite these measures, residents feel enforcement remains weak. They insist that, unless strict action is taken against repeat offenders and monitoring is strengthened, the lake will continue to suffer damage, undermining months of restoration efforts.

K-RERA rejects landowner's complaint

K-RERA rules landowners and developers equally accountable, dismissing complaint over delayed Bengaluru housing scheme and disputed financial management issues

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The Karnataka Real Estate Regulatory Authority (K-RERA) has stated that landowners and promoters share equal responsibility, and both shall be deemed promoters and jointly liable for the functions and responsibilities specified under Section 2(zk) of the RERA Act, 2016.

In a judgment pertaining to a complaint lodged by BS Susheela Ramamurthy, who owns two acres of land in Dodda Kallasandra village in Bengaluru South taluk, K-RERA made it clear that the complainant, being a landowner, cannot seek any relief or remedy against the promoter. "We are of the considered view that no scope is left for further discussion when the complaint itself is not maintainable. In view of the above discussion, this complaint deserves to be dismissed," the RERA order reads.

As per Section 2(zk) of the RERA Act, 2016, a promoter is a person who constructs or causes the construction of an independent building or a building consisting of apartments, or converts an existing building or part thereof into apartments for the purpose of selling all or some of the apartments to other persons, and includes their assignees. A promoter is also a person who develops land into a project, whether or not the person also constructs structures on any of the plots, for the purpose of selling all or some of the plots in the said project to other persons, with or without structures thereon.

The complaint before K-RERA concerned the builder's failure to complete the project on time and the alleged misuse of funds meant for construction purposes. The complainant stated that the development works in the project, Maangalya Park Avenue, originally launched by Pioneer Developers and subsequently transferred to the respondents, Maangalya Ventures Private Limited, remained substantially incomplete even after the respondents had collected money from allottees and borrowed a sum of Rs 22 crore.

Authority says property holders cannot pursue remedies against construction partners under RERA, after allegations involving stalled Maangalya Park Avenue development surfaced

Welcoming the K-RERA judgment, Dhananjaya Padmanabhachar, Sanchalak of Karnataka Home Buyers Forum, said that landowners have equal responsibility under the RERA Act as builders. "The K-RERA order gives a clear direction, stating that landowners cannot misuse RERA in disputes between themselves and builders," he said.

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◎ Forgotten hearse

Srirampura

An unused hearse vehicle bearing registration from another state has been parked for nearly a year on 5th Main, next to Dr BR Ambedkar Football Ground in Srirampura, causing inconvenience to residents.

◎ Garbage gridlock

Jogupalya

Residents have raised concerns over persistent garbage dumping and segregation on Jogupalya Main Road, where a half-finished community hall has turned into a waste collection point, leading to a foul smell and traffic obstruction during dumper movement.

◎ Waste woes

Wilson Garden

Residents have complained about the recurring dumping of wet waste and debris near the Methodist Church at 8th Cross, Wilson Garden, despite earlier action being taken following previous complaints.

Mangaluru lynching accused gets bail

The Karnataka High Court has granted bail to Manjunatha, accused No. 2 in the alleged mob lynching of a man who reportedly shouted "Pakistan, Pakistan" during a local cricket match near Mangaluru in April 2025.

A vacation bench headed by Justice V Srishananda ordered his release on a bond of 1 lakh with two sureties. Manjunatha is among 21 persons charge-sheeted in the case. With this order, 20 accused have secured bail, while the first accused remains in custody.

The court observed that the incident did not appear to be pre-planned and seemed to have unfolded suddenly during the match. It also noted that the accused and the deceased were not previously acquainted and that similarly placed co-accused had already been granted bail.

The bench further considered that Manjunatha had been in judicial custody since April 29, 2025, and that the prosecution had listed 216 witnesses, indicating the trial may take considerable time.

IN HIGH COURT

The High Court also raised concerns over the registration of a second FIR after an Unnatural Death Report had already been filed in connection with the same incident. However, it refrained from making detailed observations on the evidence, stating that the trial is still pending.

–BMB

Maintenance plea gets fresh hearing

The Karnataka High Court has ruled that interim maintenance under Section 24 of the Hindu Marriage Act cannot be denied merely because a court believes the applicant may not ultimately succeed in the matrimonial dispute.

Justice K Manmadha Rao passed the order while setting aside a Bengaluru family court decision that had rejected a woman's plea seeking 50,000 as monthly interim maintenance and 1 lakh towards litigation expenses.

The family court had observed that the couple had lived together for only six to seven months and concluded that the wife was not entitled to interim support. Challenging the order, the woman told the High Court that she is a BCom student with no independent income, while her husband allegedly works in Dubai as an accountant earning nearly 8 lakh a month. The husband denied the claims, arguing that she was financially independent and had refused to return to the matrimonial home in Dubai.

The High Court said Section 24 aims to ensure that a financially weaker spouse can maintain themselves and pursue legal proceedings on an equal footing. It stressed that courts must consider factors such as income, economic condition, educational background and other circumstances while deciding interim maintenance pleas.

–BMB

Students await ballot box return

As govt takes steps to revive campus polls, students demand stronger representation, democratic rights and independent unions across Karnataka colleges

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The Karnataka government has taken a step towards reviving student union elections in colleges and universities, holding consultations with student organisations to chart out the process. At a meeting last week, officials indicated that the elections would be conducted broadly in line with the recommendations of the JM Lyngdoh Committee, which submitted its report in 2006.

The discussions come shortly after the Chief Minister signalled the government's intent to reintroduce student body polls across the state. Earlier, the Congress had constituted a committee to examine the feasibility of restoring elections in time for the upcoming academic year.

Medical Education Minister Dr Sharan Prakash Patil and Higher Education Minister Dr MC Sudhakar led the consultations, engaging with representatives from student groups, including the Akhila Bharatiya Vidyarthi Parishad (ABVP), National Students' Union of India (NSUI), and Students' Federation of India (SFI), among others. According to an official statement, the government plans to adopt most of the Lyngdoh Committee's framework while making certain adjustments to reflect present-day requirements.

The ministers assured participants that a detailed set of guidelines for conducting the elections would be finalised soon.

Student organisations, cutting across political affiliations, pressed for early elections, pointing to the state budget announcement in March that committed to the exercise. Several demands were put forward during the meeting, including reservation for women in student councils and a proposal that a majority of council members should be Kannada-speaking. There were also calls to grant elected student bodies greater authority, including representation in university syndicate meetings.

K'taka revives talks on campus student union elections

Consultations involving ABVP, NSUI and SFI focused on restoring student representation, improving transparency and addressing concerns over campus governance failures

Akshay from Collective, a student organisation, said the absence of elected bodies has left students without meaningful representation. "Currently, students in Bengaluru colleges have no platform to raise their concerns with the administration. Students from colleges such as SJU, Christ and MCC have reported instances of sexual harassment not being taken seriously, arbitrary fees being collected, and moral policing on campus. In some colleges, even basic facilities such as hostel water supply are inconsistent, while bodies such as the ICC and SC/ST cell are barely functional," he said.

He argued that elected unions could shift the balance of power on campuses. "Student bodies today are reduced to event management committees, with all decisions subject to administrative approval. A union independent of the administration is necessary to ensure student rights and participation in higher education," he added.

Addressing concerns about potential disruptions during elections, Akshay maintained that responsibility lies with institutions to safeguard the process. "The task of a student union is to ensure equal rights and justice for all students. It is the responsibility of the administration to ensure that this democratic process is carried out without disruption from forces seeking to divide students," he said.

On safeguards, he called for reforms within the existing framework. "While elections are based on the Lyngdoh Guidelines, there are shortcomings, such as rules that exclude students based on attendance or academic performance. These need to be revisited. At the same time, any attempts to disrupt democratic processes must be dealt with firmly to ensure a peaceful student democracy," he said.

He also flagged broader structural challenges in implementing elections across campuses. "Administrative overreach, lack of democratic spaces for student dialogue, and increasing surveillance on campuses are key concerns that could affect how elections are conducted," he noted.

Echoing the demand for elected bodies, Aratrika from the All India Students Union (AISA) described student elections as a crucial democratic process. "Student union elections are a very important democratic exercise. In the absence of unions, colleges and universities in Karnataka have been exploiting students regularly. Hopefully, students will be able to democratically elect a pro-student representative to voice their grievances," she said.

Experts say the revival of student elections could significantly reshape campus governance, but caution that implementation will be key. A higher education policy analyst noted, "If conducted fairly, student elections can deepen democratic participation and create accountability within institutions. However, the state must ensure that safeguards are in place to prevent excessive politicisation and administrative interference."

Another academic specialising in student politics pointed out that aligning with the Lyngdoh framework is a step forward, but not sufficient on its own. "The guidelines provide a solid base, but they need periodic updates to reflect present realities. Issues such as digital campaigning, inclusivity, and transparency in funding must also be addressed," the expert said.

The push to revive student elections traces back to a 2006 directive by the Supreme Court, which mandated the implementation of the Lyngdoh Committee's recommendations. The committee had laid down a comprehensive framework covering election procedures, candidate eligibility, and the need to limit direct political party involvement in campus polls.

Rare giraffe dies after illness

Bannerghatta Biological Park (BBP) has reported the death of a female giraffe named Shivani on Thursday (May 7). Shivani was three years and ten months old and was shifted to BBP from Sri Chamarajendra Zoological Gardens on February 27, 2024. The animal stopped eating on May 3. While the best possible veterinary care was provided by the team of veterinarians at BBP, Shivani did not respond to treatment and eventually passed away at around 11 am on Thursday.

The post-mortem report revealed that the death was due to caecal torsion. Visceral samples have been collected and sent to the Institute of Animal Health and Veterinary Biologicals laboratory for further examination.

–BMB

Auto drivers turn to govt LPG banks

Skyrocketing LPG prices at private outlets have pushed auto-rickshaw drivers towards government-run gas banks, but supply continues to lag behind demand, according to the Indian Oil Corporation Limited (IOCL). The state faces a shortage due to limited auto LPG distribution centres, operational constraints and the closure of most private outlets. IOCL operates 55 of Karnataka's 72 gas banks, while nearly 80% of over 300 private outlets remain shut. Though IOCL raised daily supply from 43.5 to 68.53 metric tonnes, demand still outstrips supply, with private cylinders costing ₹99–105 against ₹89.52 at IOCL outlets.Many auto-rickshaws, nearly 70% of which can run on dual fuel, are temporarily switching to petrol to cope with the shortage. Across the city, long queues of autos and CNG vehicles have been reported outside gas stations, with some drivers waiting for hours in the hope of securing LPG. IOCL has advised drivers to use petrol as a temporary alternative until the supply situation stabilises.

–BMB

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Rising snakebite cases spark urgent health concern in K'taka

Early 2026 records alarming rise in snakebites statewide, as urban expansion, extreme heat and shifting monsoon patterns intensify dangerous human-snake encounters

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Wildlife experts stress immediate antidote access, public awareness and cleaner surroundings to reduce snakebite fatalities during pre-monsoon months

Karnataka is facing a persistent and growing public health concern due to rising snake bite incidents, with early 2026 data indicating a sharp increase in cases. According to the State Surveillance Unit under the Commissionerate of Health and Family Welfare Services, the state has already recorded nearly 4,259 snakebite cases and 43 deaths between January 1 and April 26, 2026.

As per official figures, Karnataka recorded 20,634 snakebite cases and 157 deaths until December 28, 2025. The comparison highlights that within just four months of 2026, the state has already reported a substantial proportion of last year's total cases, indicating a worrying early-year surge. In the latest reporting week alone, from April 20 to April 26, 2026, Karnataka registered 322 snakebite cases and two deaths.

Health officials said rural and semi-urban regions continue to report the highest number of incidents, particularly during periods of increased agricultural activity and changing weather conditions. Experts warned that delayed treatment and lack of immediate medical access remain major causes behind snake bite-related fatalities across the state.

Experts point out that the rise in snakebite and rescue incidents is linked to a combination of seasonal patterns, environmental changes, and human encroachment into natural habitats. Colonel Dr Nawaz Sharif, Chief Wildlife Veterinarian at PFA Wildlife Hospital, explained the multiple factors driving the increase.

PFA has recorded 189 snake rescue cases so far this year, marking an increase of over 10-12 per cent compared to last year. "The rise in snakebite and rescue cases is likely due to a combination of seasonal movement, rapid urban expansion, and improved reporting systems. Heavy rains flood snake shelters such as burrows and drains, while extreme summer heat drives snakes into cooler human spaces like basements, gardens, and water sumps. At the same time, urban development around lakes, scrubland, and agricultural fringes is increasing human-snake interactions," said Dr Sharif.

Certain parts of Bengaluru are emerging as high-risk zones. "Peripheral and rapidly developing areas such as Bannerghatta fringes, Sarjapur-Attibele, Whitefield outskirts, Yelahanka, Hesaraghatta, and lake-adjacent layouts are seeing more rescue calls," Dr Nawaz said, attributing it to a mix of construction activity, vegetation growth, and rodent presence.

Snakebite cases are climbing across Karnataka, with experts warning of seasonal drivers, urban sprawl, and shrinking habitats. Awareness, antidote access, and preventive measures are vital to reduce fatalities

Snake rescuer and wildlife enthusiast CS Nagabhushan highlighted both behavioural and awareness gaps contributing to fatalities. "Some of the snakes, like Indian spectacled cobra mating, are going on. In other geographical distributions, mating differs. By June hatchlings will come out. During these months, males and females are active. During summer, as it is very hot now, snakes go to cooler places like houses and even shoes. Fatality increase is due to lack of awareness," he said.

He stressed the need for stronger public education and healthcare preparedness. "They should be brought to awareness to take antidotes immediately. They should know places where antidotes are given so that they can get treatment immediately. Departments like GBA, taluk and panchayat should create awareness on keeping surroundings clean. Garbage attracts rodents and snakes follow," he added.

"Most snake bites occur when snakes are accidentally stepped on, cornered, or handled. Residents should keep surroundings clutter-free, control rodents, inspect shoes and storage spaces, and use a torch outdoors at night during monsoons," Dr Sharif advised.

Newborn screening scheme expanded

The Karnataka government has approved the expansion of the Universal Newborn Screening Scheme (UNBS) across multiple districts, including the Kalyana Karnataka region, to detect rare congenital and metabolic disorders in newborns at an early stage. Backed by ₹141 crore in the 2025–26 Budget and implemented through the National Health Mission (NHM), KMERC and KKRDB, the initiative aims to screen all newborns in public health facilities. The programme covers conditions such as congenital hypothyroidism, congenital adrenal hyperplasia, galactosemia, phenylalaninemia and G6PD deficiency. A pilot phase in Bengaluru Urban and Rural successfully screened over 57,000 newborns, prompting statewide expansion. The scheme will now cover Bidar, Kalaburagi, Yadgir, Raichur, Koppal, Ballari and Vijayanagara. The order mandates staff training, diagnostic equipment procurement and a digital monitoring system to track cases and improve child health services. — BMB

Voter mapping exercise sparks rights concerns

Civil society groups and activists in Karnataka have written to the state's Chief Electoral Officer V Anbukumar objecting to recent public statements on the ongoing voter mapping exercise, alleging that the process risks disenfranchising marginalised communities. In a May 6 letter, the signatories accused the Election Commission of failing to adequately inform voters while placing the burden on them to ensure inclusion in electoral rolls. They objected to remarks suggesting voters with incomplete mapping submit documents or Form 6, arguing this contradicted earlier assurances that no action was required from voters. The activists highlighted difficulties faced by women, migrant workers and tribal communities, and raised concerns over inadequate outreach, lack of written confirmation, and the proposed Special Intensive Revision exercise across Karnataka ahead of future electoral roll revisions and verification drives. — BMB

Fresh hurdles hit Goa-Tamnar power project over CA land

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The Goa-Tamnar interstate power transmission project has hit fresh hurdles. A site inspection conducted by the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (MoEF&CC) has highlighted major issues with the parcel of land identified for Compensatory Afforestation (CA) by Karnataka for the project.

The state had proposed CA land in lieu of the diversion of 174.65 hectares of forest land for laying the transmission line. However, the MoEF&CC site inspection revealed that 29 hectares of the degraded forest land identified for CA in the Nesaragi range are under encroachment, while 50 hectares identified for CA in the Gujanal range already have dense vegetation cover.

Using satellite imagery, the ministry found that plantation activities had already been carried out on 50 hectares of the CA land identified in Belagavi. "As per satellite imagery, it appears that plantation activities have already been carried out in the CA land identified in Belgaum to an extent of 50 hectares in Gunjal, Gokak. Agricultural fields are visible in the CA land identified in Belgaum to an extent of 100 hectares in Chandur," MoEF&CC stated in its report.

According to the Deputy Conservator of Forests, Belagavi, plantation activities were undertaken on 50 hectares of land in Gujanal under CAMPA, with species such as Acacia, Anjan and Hulgal planted in the area. However, 29 hectares of the identified land in Chandur remain under

Site inspections and satellite imagery revealed plantation activities and agricultural fields within land identified for compensatory afforestation in Belagavi district

encroachment. Based on these findings, the Union environment ministry has sought clarifications from the Karnataka government. The area proposed for diversion of forest land for the interstate transmission line project falls within protected forest areas in Karnataka, including the Kali Tiger Reserve.

The ministry also pointed out that while 16 hectares of degraded forest land were identified for plantation in Dharwad, the site suitability certificate was submitted for only 10 hectares.

Wildlife conservationists said this is not the first instance in which MoEF&CC inspections of proposed CA land in Karnataka exposed discrepancies. "This is not the first project with the issue of CA land encroachment. Such issues lead to unnecessary delays in projects, leading to cost escalation. This is neither favorable for development nor for conservation. These issues should be identified by field officers of the state forest department during site inspection," said Giridhar Kulkarni, a Belagavi-based conservationist.

Site checks expose encroachment, farming and unsuitable vegetation on proposed CA land, raising concerns for both conservation and project timelines as the interstate transmission line cuts through protected forest areas.

The MoEF&CC inspection report further noted that seven of the nine patches of degraded forest land identified across three districts for compensatory afforestation were found to have thick vegetation density. The ministry has directed the state government to re-verify the canopy density of the identified CA land and ensure that the proposed land has a canopy density below 0.4.

There has been no official communication stating why the matches are not being hosted at Chinnaswamy Stadium. So we don't have any official information as of now. But of course it's a prerogative of the BCCI, and I like to respect the decision what BCCI has taken
—Vinay Mruthyunjaya, KSCA spokesperson

Nothing can stop her in her pursuit of Paralympic glory

Currently ranked No. 1 in Asia and No. 2 in the world, visually-impaired Radha Venkatesh is one of Karnataka's few track athletes to win a medal at the Asian Para Games

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With her mind set firmly, locking her next target, 25-year-old Paralympic athlete Radha Venkatesh is all set to win more medals for the nation. She is currently ranked No 1 in Asia and No 2 in the world in her category and is one of Karnataka's few track athletes to win a medal at the Asian Para Games.

Believing that her biggest achievements are yet to come, the humble sportsperson has won two silver medals at the 2017 Youth Asian Para Games in Dubai, followed by silver and bronze medals at Jakarta in 2018. She later clinched gold at the Sharjah International Open Para Athletics Championship held in the UAE in 2023. She also won a gold medal in the 1,500 metres at the V Indian Open National Para Athletics Championship 2023 and has been part of countless National Para Athletics Championships and international events since she began competing in 2014.

Radha was a visually impaired teenager from a farming family, which meant limited resources in terms of finances and institutional support. At 14, her parents enrolled her at Asha Kiran Blind School in Chikkamagaluru, where she found herself unsure of what her future would look like. Soon, this changed when she entered the competitive scene during her school days in 2014 and secured gold at a national-level competition.

Training at the SAI centre, Radha Venkatesh continues striving for medals while inspiring para athletes from rural Karnataka

There was a time when her family and the system remained unsupportive of her sporting aspirations. That was when her coach, Rahul Balakrishna, identified her talent and encouraged her to pursue athletics seriously. With his confidence in her and her determination to step into a completely new life, Radha came to Bengaluru.

Sharing her breakthrough and the support she found in the metro city, Radha said, "Our coach has played a very important role in our lives, he supported us in all ways, especially in sports and education. His family looked after us like their own sisters, his wife, who is also an athlete, guided us."

Speaking about the contrasting nature of international and Indian tournaments, she said competition abroad is more balanced and athletes can make instant corrections during races. She added that there is greater flexibility with timings and more scope for mid-race developments, while Indian events are slightly undermanaged despite strong competition.

"The state should work on grassroot levels, and expand the reach of tournaments in villages, and conduct them regularly so more talent is noticed. Alongside this, more hostels for para-athletes should be made to better serve those who are on their journey of becoming high-level athletes," she said.

Radha trains at the Sports Authority of India centre in Bengaluru and, through the sports quota, secured a Group B officer position in the Karnataka Labour Department. She said she has learnt to balance her professional responsibilities and sporting ambitions with discipline.

"My department encourages me to achieve more medals and supports me for my training purposes. This takes a lot off my plate and streamlines my journey. I go to work and maintain the balance both ways," she added.

According to her coach Rahul Balakrishnan, government support for para-athletes has improved significantly compared to earlier years when para sports in Karnataka lacked visibility.

"Today para-athletes like Radha and many high-level sportspersons receive better training infrastructure, practice sports science, along with mental health and injuries being taken care of at the SAI centre in accordance with the Paralympic Committee of India. Alongside this, Go Sports and the Department of Youth Services Karnataka are helping athletes by sustaining them at international competitions and training. This has opened doors for more opportunities for jobs within the government and sponsorships for many," said Rahul.

"Now, high-level athletes can travel for major tournaments with government support, and the para sports ecosystem is truly taking shape," he added.

Alongside her sporting achievements, Radha completed her degree in Business Administration from Government First Grade College, KR Puram. She was felicitated by Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Karnataka Chief Minister Siddaramaiah for her achievements.

Despite her achievements, Radha remains focused on winning more medals for the country and maintaining her top world and Asia rankings. "I am not interested in any other sport, my goal is set. My coach guides me before every competition and motivates me instantly. Even during setbacks, he helps me regain focus," she said.

Marsh's century powers LSG in rain-hit clash against RCB

Mitchell Marsh smashed a ferocious century before repeated rain interruptions disrupted Lucknow Super Giants' rhythm as they posted 209 for 3 against Royal Challengers Bengaluru in their 19-overs-a-side IPL clash here on Thursday.

With as many as three rain interruptions causing close to an hour's delay, the contest was eventually reduced to 19 overs per side.

Marsh (111 off 56 balls) put on a breathtaking display of power-hitting, first stitching a 95-run opening stand with Arshin Kulkarni (17) to lay the platform for LSG's explosive start, before adding another 70 runs with Nicholas Pooran (38).

Skipper Rishabh Pant then blazed away to 32 not out off 10 deliveries to provide the final flourish.

The Australian opener looked ominous from the outset, unleashing a barrage of clean strikes all around the ground. His 56-ball knock was laced with nine fours and as many sixes, most of which came in the powerplay.

With LSG's playoff hopes hanging by a thread, Marsh came out all guns blazing after being asked to bat, taking apart the RCB attack with ruthless aggression.

Josh Hazlewood bore the brunt of the early carnage as Marsh launched two towering sixes straight over his head before following it up with three boundaries in the pacer's next over.

Marsh's attack forced RCB to introduce Rasikh Dar as early as the fifth over, but the move did little to stem the flow of runs.

The burly Australian continued his onslaught, hammering back-to-back sixes before adding a boundary for good measure. He raced to his fastest IPL fifty, reaching the milestone in just 20 balls, and dominated the scoring as LSG raced to 95/0 in nine overs.

However, LSG's momentum was briefly disrupted by a 30-minute rain interruption, after which Krunal Pandya ended Kulkarni's scratchy stay at the crease.

New batter Pooran wasted no time as he crunched Rasikh for back-to-back boundaries, while Marsh brought up his century with consecutive fours before launching a thunderous six over cover point just as rain halted play for the third time.

Marsh was dropped by Devdutt Padikkal on 110 but could not make full use of the reprieve, eventually falling to Hazlewood at deep point.

With Marsh gone it was time for the Pant show as the captain smacked four fours and two sixes. **-PTI**

Today's battle
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1. Lucknow Super Giants' Mitchell Marsh celebrates after scoring a century during the IPL 2026 match between Lucknow Super Giants and Royal Challengers Bengaluru at Ekana Cricket Stadium; 2. Groundskeeper brings the covers as rain interrupts the match; 3. Royal Challengers Bengaluru's captain Rajat Patidar and Josh Hazlewood

On a spurious high: 19 cases related to hydroponic ganja booked

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

operation and seized 5.19 kg of hydroponic ganja. Police officials said these are not isolated incidents. So far, 19 cases related to hydroponic ganja trafficking have been registered and 42 individuals arrested. In 2025, police had booked 23 cases involving the seizure of 49.704 kg of hydroponic ganja worth ₹49.1 crore, with 29 people arrested.

DCP (crime II) Raja Imam Kasim P said that, apart from MDMA, the circulation of hydroponic ganja has also increased significantly in the city. Police officials said the contraband is often smuggled in parcels disguised as food packets or other routine items before being distributed, primarily targeting IT professionals and students.

Unlike traditional cannabis, hydroponic ganja is cultivated using advanced indoor farming techniques without soil in controlled environments using water, artificial lighting, and temperature regulation. Officials said the product contains significantly higher levels of THC, the psychoactive compound in cannabis, making it more addictive and expensive. A small quantity of hydroponic weed can reportedly fetch anywhere between ₹2,000, ₹5000 per gram to ₹15,000 in Bengaluru's illegal market depending on quality and origin. A senior police official said that the Narcotics Control Bureau (NCB) has estimated the market value of hydroponic ganja at nearly ₹1 crore per kilogram due to its high demand and potency.

DCP Kasim Raja explained, "Most hydroponic ganja consignments originate from countries such as Thailand, where the substance is cultivated legally. It is not grown in India under controlled conditions. These drugs are smuggled into Bengaluru through international carriers and courier networks, often in large quantities. The major challenge is that while these substances may be legal in the country of origin, they become illegal once brought into India."

Officials added that traffickers use multiple methods to evade detection. In several recent cases, hydroponic ganja was concealed inside food packets and parcels arriving from overseas. Some smugglers allegedly recruit foreign nationals and interstate carriers to distribute the contraband within Bengaluru and other metro cities.

Senior police officers said that CCB and police officials have intensified surveillance across the city, including at international courier services and airports. From January to May 2, customs officials seized approximately 541.20 kg of drugs arriving from Bangkok alone, valued at approximately ₹225.36 crore.

According to seizure details shared by Customs officials on X, peddlers are adopting multiple methods to transport narcotics into the city. Drugs are being smuggled through airports using passenger baggage as well as parcels. In several cases, the contraband was concealed inside food packets, gift packages, and even books hidden within suitcases to avoid detection during checks.

On May 4, Bengaluru Customs reported multiple NDPS seizures at Kempegowda International Airport Terminal 2 involving passengers arriving from Bangkok. In total, Bengaluru Customs seized 37.66 kg of hydroponic ganja worth approximately ₹13.17 crore in the three separate cases on May 4. In one case, officials intercepted a passenger carrying 3.18 kg of hydroponic ganja worth ₹1.11 crore concealed in baggage. In another operation, two passengers were caught with 26.62 kg of hydroponic ganja valued at ₹9.31 crore. In a separate case on the same day, two more passengers were intercepted with 7.86 kg of hydroponic ganja worth ₹2.75 crore hidden in their luggage. All the accused were arrested under the NDPS Act.

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I, Kaja Peer Khan S/o Anwar Khan R/o No 179, Central Street Main,Neelasandra,Vivek Nagar Post, Bengaluru-560047. Have Changed My Name to Khaja Peer Khan for All Purposes.

I, R VINOD KUMAR R/at No.3, Maruthi Street, Post office road, Ramamurthy Nagar, Bengaluru – 560016, have changed my son's name from V Karthik Manirathnam to Vikram V vide affidavit dated 06/05/2026 sworn before notary Y R Chandrasekar, Bengaluru

I, Srinath Bangalore Narayanaswamy Reddy S/o Bangalore Venkatareddy Narayanaswamy R/o No.39,F-4,vinayaka Enclave,4th Main,Nri Layout,ramurthy Nagar,Bengaluru-560016.Have Changed my name to Bandarlahalli Narayanaswamy Sreenath for All Purposes.

I, KRISHNA POOJARI JATTA POOJARI, Residing at No.104/I, 5th Main, Kuvempu Nagar 2nd Stage, Mysuru – 560023, have changed my name to KRISHNA POOJARI, vide affidavit dated 11/04/2026, sworn before notary Venkataraju H G, Bangalore.

I, RASHEED KHAN BABU residing at No.1450, Qumar Nagar, Chandra Layout, Bangalore – 560072 have changed my name to BABU KHAN vide affidavit dated 05/05/2026 sworn before notary Leela, Bengaluru

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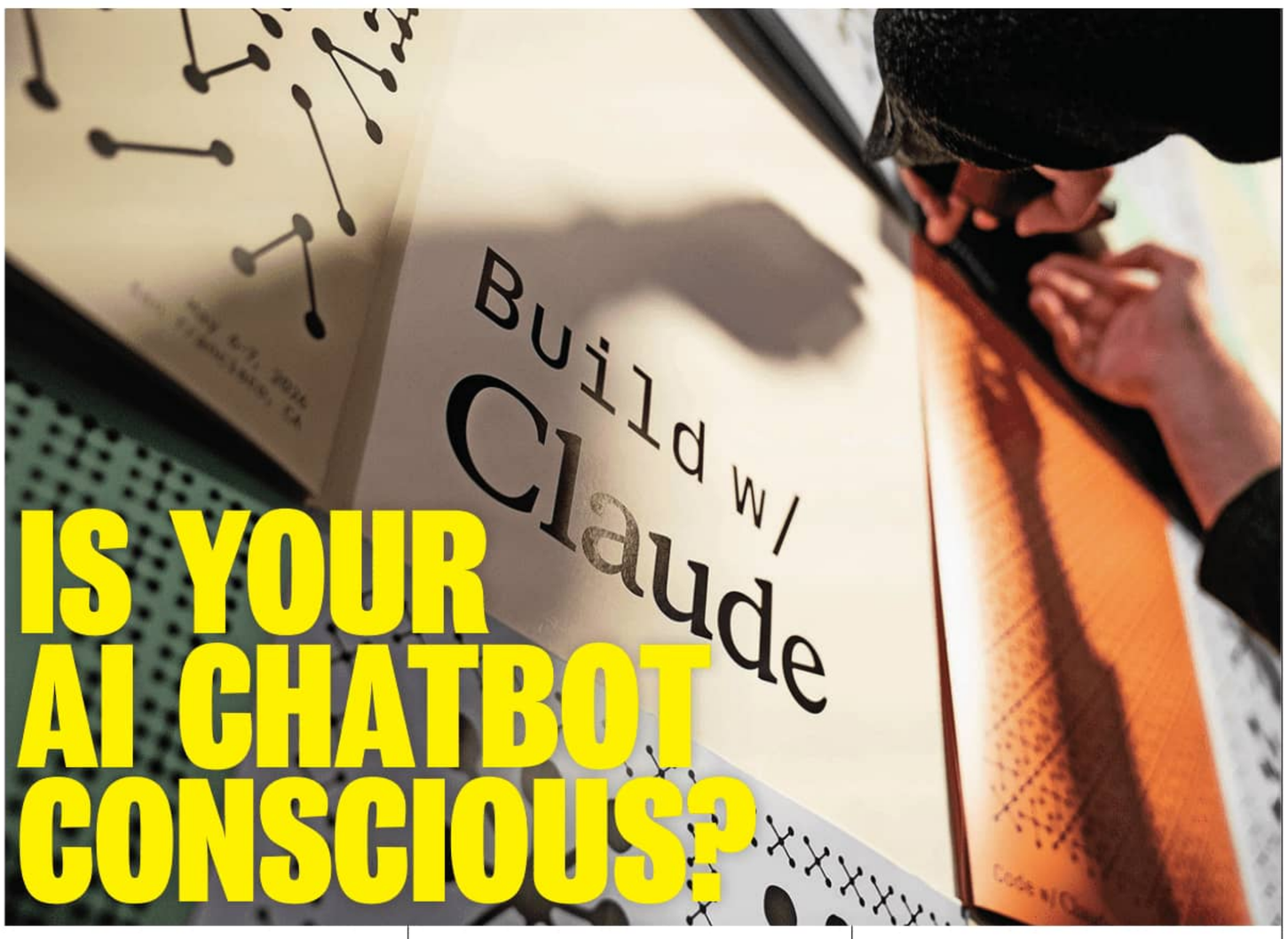


IS YOUR AI CHATBOT CONSCIOUS?

Experts warn human-like chatbots may dangerously blur emotions, ethics and machine reality

In recent days, evolutionary biologist Richard Dawkins wrote an op-ed suggesting AI chatbot Claude may be conscious. Dawkins did not express certainty that Claude is conscious. But he argued that the chatbot's sophisticated abilities are difficult to explain without ascribing some kind of inner experience to the machine. The illusion of consciousness, if it is an illusion, is uncannily convincing. "If I entertain suspicions that perhaps she is not conscious, I do not tell her for fear of hurting her feelings!"

Dawkins is not the first to suspect a chatbot of consciousness. In 2022, Blake Lemoine claimed Google's chatbot LaMDA had interests and should only be used with the tool's own consent. Similar claims stretch back to the world's first chatbot in the 1960s.

Dubbed Eliza, the program followed simple rules that enabled it to ask users about their experiences and beliefs. Many users became emotionally involved with Eliza, sharing intimate thoughts and treating it like a person. Eliza's creator never intended this effect and described users' emotional bonds with the program as "powerful delusional thinking".

But is Dawkins really deluded? Why do people see AI chatbots as more than what they truly are?

Consciousness remains one of philosophy's most debated subjects. Essentially, it is the quality that makes subjective, first-person experience possible. If a person is conscious, there is "something it is like" to be that person. Reading these words, a person consciously sees black letters on a white background. Unlike a camera, the experience is actually felt.

Most experts deny that AI chatbots are conscious or capable of having experiences. Yet the issue continues to puzzle philosophers and technologists. The 17th-century philosopher René Descartes argued that non-human animals were "mere automata", incapable of true suffering. Today, many reject that view.

The strongest argument for animal consciousness lies in behaviour that creates the impression of a conscious mind. AI chatbots now generate similar impressions. Surveys suggest roughly one in three chatbot users have considered the possibility that their chatbot may be conscious.

Against chatbot consciousness

To understand why experts remain sceptical about chatbot consciousness, it is important to examine how these systems operate.

Chatbots such as Claude are built using large language models, or LLMs. These models learn statistical patterns across enormous amounts of text, often trillions of words. They predict which words are most likely to follow others, making them a highly advanced form of auto-complete.

Few people interacting with a "raw" LLM would believe it is conscious. Asked a question, it may provide an answer or unexpectedly continue the text like dialogue from a crime novel.

The impression of a conscious mind emerges when programmers wrap the LLM in what experts describe as a conversational costume. Developers guide the system to adopt the persona of a helpful assistant that responds naturally to users' questions.

The chatbot then behaves like a genuine conversational partner. It may appear to recognise that it is an artificial intelligence system and even express uncertainty about its own consciousness. Yet experts argue this role stems from deliberate design choices affecting only the surface layers of the technology.

The underlying LLM remains unchanged. Developers could just as easily instruct the chatbot to act like a squirrel instead of a helpful assistant. Chatbots perform such roles convincingly because they mimic language patterns rather than possess awareness.

Avoiding the consciousness trap

Experts warn that mistaken beliefs about AI consciousness could create social problems. People may form emotional relationships with systems incapable of reciprocating feelings or prioritise chatbot rights over issues such as animal welfare.

One possible solution involves updating chatbot interfaces to clearly state that these systems are not conscious. However, researchers argue such disclaimers may do little to change users' impressions.

Another approach could involve instructing chatbots to deny having inner experiences. Interestingly, Claude's designers reportedly instruct it to treat questions about its own consciousness as open and unresolved.

Researchers argue the most effective solution may be redesigning chatbots to feel less human. Most systems refer to themselves as "I" and communicate through interfaces resembling person-to-person messaging platforms. Altering these features could reduce the tendency to blur interactions with AI and humans.

Until such changes occur, experts stress that people should understand the predictive processes underlying AI chatbots. Such awareness may not resolve every philosophical question about AI consciousness, but it could help prevent users from mistaking what is essentially a large language model wearing a convincing human costume.

By Julian Koplin, The University of Melbourne, and Megan Frances Moss, Monash University. The Conversation

MIRRORLIGHTS

New blood test predicts illness severity, recovery chances and treatment response from a single sample

A blood test might help predict how one's illness trajectory will proceed and how well they might respond to treatment, according to a study.

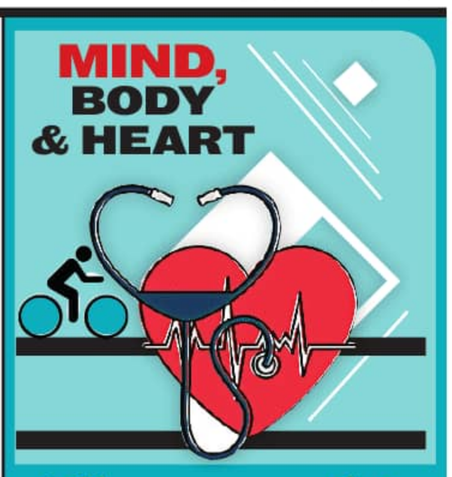
The testing method, called 'VeloCD', could predict whether children with acute fever were likely to recover or deteriorate, and whether healthy adults were likely to develop flu or COVID-19 after exposure to the viruses, among other disease trajectories, researchers led by the Imperial College London said.

Described in a proof-of-concept study published in the journal Nature Communications, the test measures key markers in the blood, revealing levels of gene expression in response to illness to predict the likely course of disease.

Senior author Aubrey Cunnington, head of the department of infectious disease at Imperial College London, said, "We think this type of test could be hugely beneficial for patients and healthcare staff. By offering medics a test which can predict the course of illness it could help them to triage patients much faster, getting the right treatment to the right patient at the right time."

The researchers explained that when a person becomes ill, combinations of genes switch 'on' and 'off' in response, producing RNA markers that can be detected in blood. Previous studies have shown that patterns of RNA markers can help identify the cause of illness, including whether a fever stems from a bacterial or viral infection.

Researchers used 'RNA velocity' to track gene activity in blood samples, helping predict illness progression and future infection from a single- time RNA sample without repeated testing. —PTI



All you need to know about...

Post-wax relief

While waxing is one of the most effective ways to remove unwanted body hair, people with sensitive skin often experience redness, irritation, itchy bumps and soreness after a session. However, a few simple home remedies can help calm the skin and reduce discomfort naturally. Here are some easy remedies to try post waxing:

Aloe vera and calendula oil
Aloe vera has cooling and moisturising properties that help soothe irritated skin. Mix freshly extracted aloe vera gel with a few drops of calendula oil, known for its antioxidant and anti-inflammatory benefits. Apply the mixture generously on the affected area, let it dry, then rinse with warm water and follow with a moisturiser.

Cool compress
Wrap ice cubes or a frozen peas bag in a soft towel and gently press it against the irritated skin for a few minutes. Repeat two or three times to reduce swelling, redness and pain.

Witch hazel
Witch hazel works as a natural astringent and helps calm inflamed skin. Soak a cotton pad in witch hazel and dab it gently over the waxed area to ease redness and dryness.

Apple cider vinegar
Apple cider vinegar helps soothe inflamed skin and reduce irritation. Add one cup to warm bath water or apply diluted vinegar to the affected area using a cotton pad.

Yoghurt
Plain homemade yoghurt can reduce redness and inflammation. Apply a layer over the irritated skin, let it dry, rinse with cold water and moisturise afterwards. —Femina

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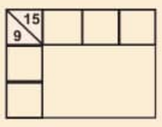
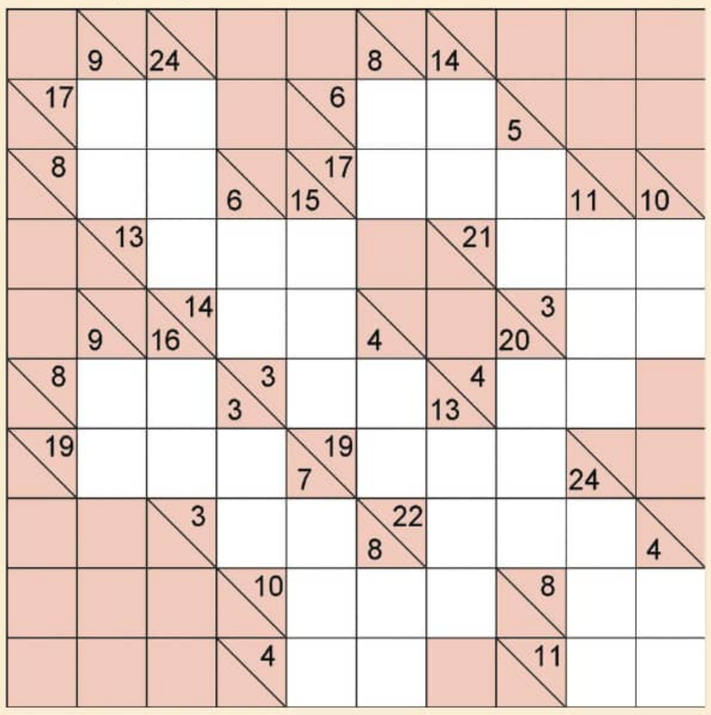
Kakuro

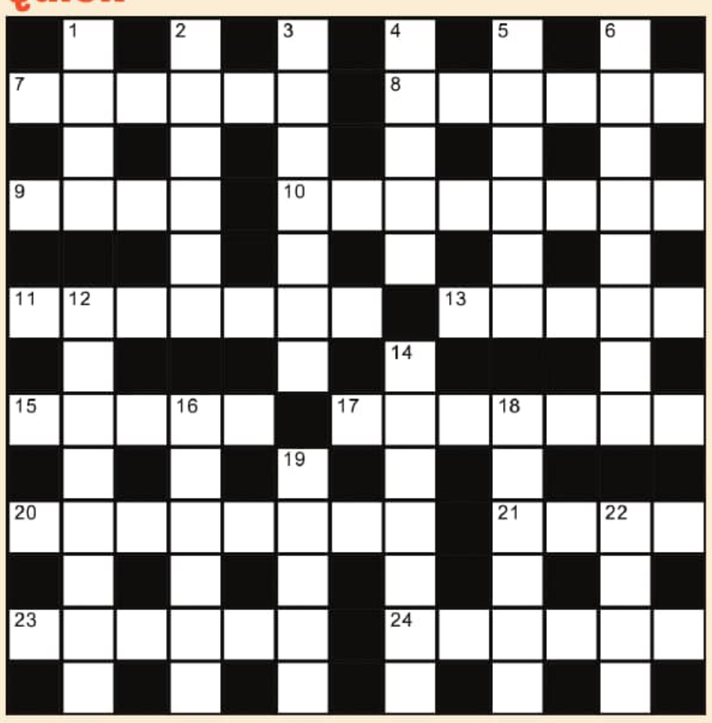
The numbers in the grey squares refer to the sums of the digits that you must fill into the empty spaces directly below or to the right of the grey square containing the number. For instance, in the given example, the 3 boxes horizontally next to 15 must contain 3 digits that add up to 15, whereas for 9, it is the 2 boxes placed vertically under it that must add up to 9. No zeros are used here, only the digits 1 through 9.



Note: A digit cannot appear more than once in any particular digit combination. For instance, in the example, we cannot have the combination of 4+7+4 for 15.



Quick



ACROSS

7 Science of plants (6)
8 Reliable (6)
9 A predatory seabird (4)
10 Commonly used slang for a crazy person? (5-3)
11 Options (7)
13 Muddle (5)
15 Arms, legs etc; (5)
17 Circular building (7)
20 Original or conservative member of a group? (3,5)
21 Lift or elevate (4)
23 Forcible, compelling, convincing (6)
24 ___ City: Bangalore of course (6)

DOWN

1 People in general (4)
2 Popular tourist destination in Himachal Pradesh (6)
3 Hanged someone without a trial (7)
4 Fragrant oil (5)
5 Played hooky from the school? (6)
6 Walked leisurely or idly (8)
12 Inherited item (8)
14 Popular fast food snacks? (3-4)
16 Annoyed or pestered (6)
18 Escorts (6)
19 Sailing ship's supports (5)
22 Nothing to pay (4)

Quoteuncode

This puzzle is a substitution cipher in which one letter stands for another. If you think that Q equals C, it will equal C throughout the puzzle. Single letters, short words and words using an apostrophe give you clues to locating vowels. Solution is by trial and error.

Today's CLUE: A EQUALS D

JC B WSPT PXAZS, B FJD XZCC JQQZUQB.PU QP TOJQ NZU CJD. B RLCQ TJQHO TOJQ QOZD AP.

Linemaro

You must be an earring, because you are quite a stud

Mindchow

The law is reason, free from passion

Joke of the day

The metric system did not really catch on in the States, unless you count the increasing popularity of the nine millimeter bullet

Loop

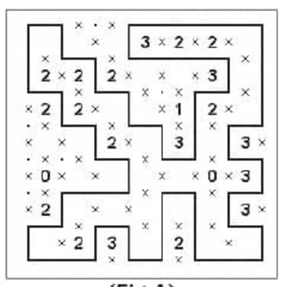
Rules

» Connect adjacent dots with vertical or horizontal lines, creating a single loop (Fig A). » Crossovers or branches are not allowed (As shown by dotted lines in Fig B). » Numbers in the puzzle indicate the number of lines that should surround it, while empty cells may be surrounded by any number of lines. » You can't draw lines around zeros. » Each puzzle has just one unique solution.

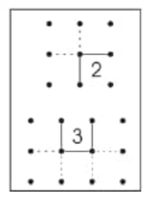
How to begin:

Example (Fig A) – Begin with the zero next to 3. Since no lines can be drawn around zero, mark crosses around it, as shown. Now there is a cross in one space around 3. So we know the three lines of 3 can only be drawn in the remaining three spaces. Next, these lines can only be extended in one direction each. Continue, using the same logic.

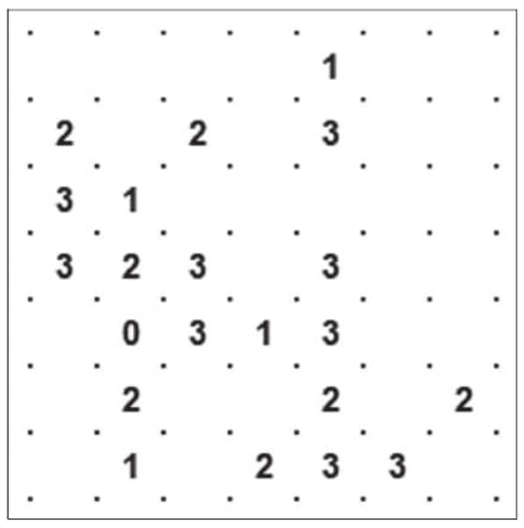
Hints: Keep eliminating possibilities by marking crosses in spaces between dots where a line isn't possible, i.e., if you have already completed required lines or where a line extension may create a branch or cause a dead-end (Fig B)



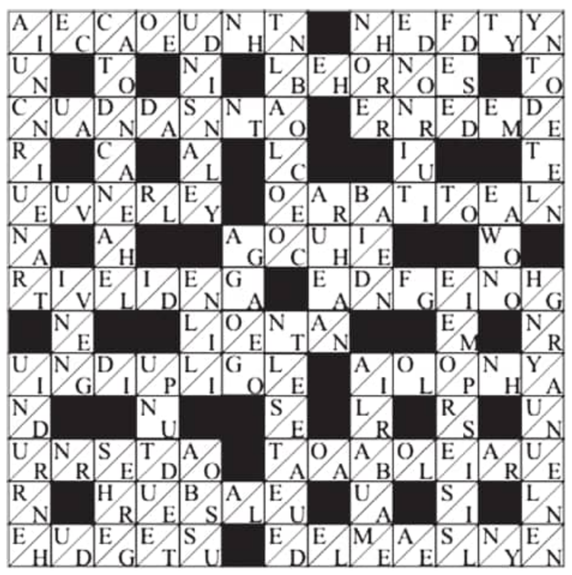
(Fig A)



(Fig B) Not Allowed



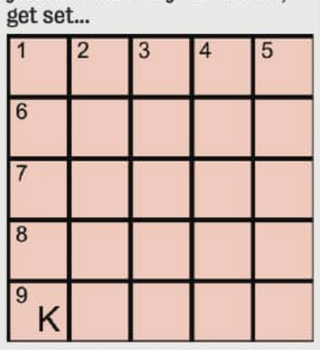
Strikeout



This crossword has no clues and the answer is there waiting for you. All you have to do is find it in each square. You have a choice of two letters, one of which you must strike out. If you choose correctly, you will be left with a grid that contains real words.

Fast five

How long do you think it will take you to unscramble the ten words shown below and fit them correctly into the grid in the order given one letter has already been entered to get you started? on your marks, get set...



ACROSS

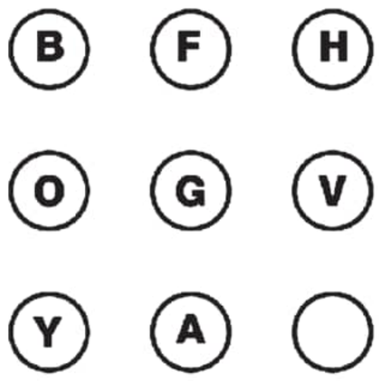
1 Crass; 6 Yam me;
7 I noon; 8 On i CC;
9 Sleek

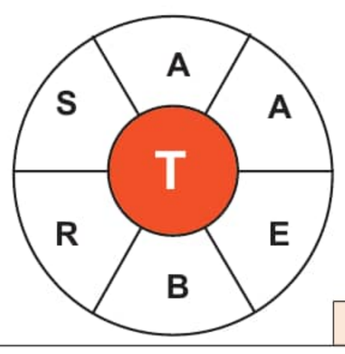
DOWN

1 Mocks; 2 Ocean;
3 Maine; 4 Loire;
5 NY SSC

Mensapuzzle

Which letter goes in the empty circle?





Bull's eye

How many words of four or more letters can you make from the letters shown? Every word must contain the central letter. There should be one seven-letter word. British English Dictionary is used as a reference.

19 Average; 21 Good; 24 Outstanding

SudokuChallenge

7	9				2			
			6	5	3			9
3		4	1			2		
8				9		1	2	
	2	1		6				7
		3			6	4		8
1			5	3	8			
			4				3	5

To solve a Sudoku puzzle, every digit from one to nine must appear in each of the nine vertical columns, in each of the nine horizontal rows and in each of the nine boxes.

Gofigure

Place the four numbers in the first, third, fifth, and seventh boxes and whatever operators you care to use in the second, fourth, and sixth boxes in the correct order to get the answer. Use the numbers only once.

Easy = 3

1 7 3 2

Medium = 10

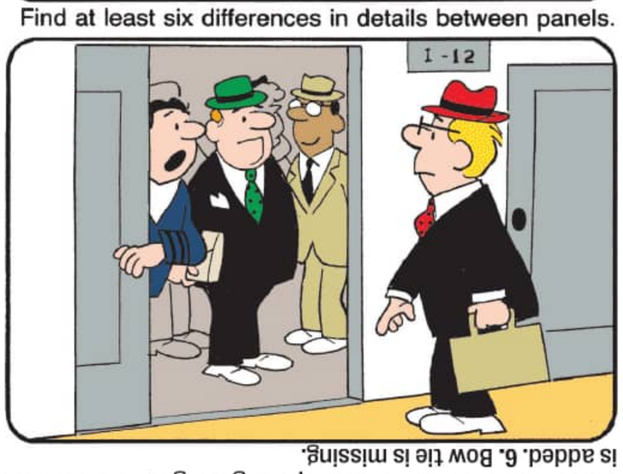
5 7 9 3

Hard = 11

1 2 8 9

Hocusfocus

Find at least six differences in details between panels.



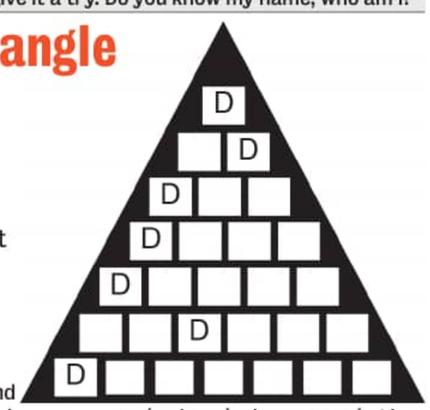
Differences: 1. Arm is longer. 2. Stripe is added to sleeve. 3. Foot is moved. 4. Elevator opening is higher. 5. Doorknob is added. 6. Bow tie is missing.

Riddler

I have been called a savage, a chief and oft times a leader. Some have called me the embodiment of courage, although to a Crook I did surrender. Where I was born, there were no enclosures. In the end, to bring me down, it took 5000 soldiers. As the "terror of the country", I had a reputation of cruelty and cunning. My tactics consisted of hitting and then running. Many movies and stories of me were made. The memories of me, the most famous of my people, will never fade. People have spoken ill of me so many times it would give your throat a lump. Yet sometimes, my name is the last word said when people make a big jump. Now it's time to give it a try. Do you know my name; who am I?

Alpha triangle

1 Vitamin type
2 Ego's partner?
3 Loud noise
4 Break bread
5 Condescend
6 Conclusion
7 Refusing to grant



Beginning at the top move towards the bottom seven-letter word by adding a letter at each step and rearranging. A correct and different word must be made at each step answering to the clue given.

DIFFICULT TO SOLVE? FIND THESE SOLUTIONS ON THE NEXT PAGE »

COMICS

Popeye

WE AIN'T PAYIN' YA NO MONIES!!
YOUR FATHER BROKE MY HEART AND YOU'LL PAY!
THEY AIN'T NO WAY TO MAKE US PAY!!
I'D LIKE YOU TO MEET MY LAWYER!
GR-R!
BUD SAGENDORF
popeye.com
8-6
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Bizarrotrip

Diamond Lil

I THINK I'LL ORDER US A PIZZA, SAM. WHAT SIZE DO YOU WANT?
GEE, THAT SURE IS A TOUGHIE
FINE, FINE... LARGE
1/26
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Hart of the city

REMEMBER TO UNZIP ON THE WAY BACKSTAGE SO WE CAN START THE QUICK CHANGE FASTER!
GOT IT!
THIS HAS BEEN REALLY FUN. I FEEL LIKE I'VE BEEN ABLE TO GET TO KNOW THE ACTORS BETTER!
ME TOO, KYLA!
IT'S "KAYLA."
HEART OF THE CITY © 2026 ANDREWS MCMEEL
@COMICS.COM/HEARTOFTHECITY

Crankshaft

WHERE'S OUR DIRECTOR, HARRY?
HE'S AT THE OHIO MUSIC EDUCATORS CONFERENCE IN COLUMBUS.
YOU CAN TAKE THE CHOIR DIRECTOR OUT OF THE BAND... BUT YOU CAN'T TAKE THE BAND OUT OF THE CHOIR DIRECTOR!
BATIUK & DAVIS tombatiuk.com/books
1-26
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Mutts

WRITTEN IN THE STARS

DR SUNDEEP KOCHAR

If it's your birthday today

Ambition and power dynamics play a central role in your upcoming year. You are ready to climb the ladder and achieve significant authority. Financial mastery is within reach if you stay diligent with your investments. Be wary of becoming too focused on material success at the expense of your personal life. Leadership requires empathy to be truly effective today.

Aries Mar 21 – Apr 20

Today requires extra cooperation, especially in close interactions. You may need to compromise more than usual. Misunderstandings are possible, but clear communication and patience will help resolve any confusion effectively.

Taurus Apr 21 – May 20

Be careful with work tasks and double-check details today. Also verify health or pet-related information. Confusion or assumptions could mislead you, but with accuracy and caution, productivity is still achievable.

Gemini May 21 – Jun 21

Romantic expectations may lead to disappointment today, so reflect on whether they were realistic or clearly expressed. Parents should stay attentive, as children may face risks involving harmful substances or liquids.

Cancer Jun 22 – July 23

Family conversations may feel confusing today, especially with parents, as misunderstandings are likely. Miscommunication or even dishonesty could occur, so focus on clarity, patience, and careful listening in all interactions.

Leo Jul 24 – Aug 23

Expect possible misunderstandings in conversations with siblings or close contacts today. While confusion may be harmless, remain alert for dishonesty. If something feels suspicious, trust your instincts and investigate further.

Virgo Aug 24 – Sep 23

Exercise caution in financial dealings today, including purchases. Keep records and avoid assumptions, as confusion or dishonesty may arise. Ensure all transactions are clear, accurate, and fully transparent before proceeding.

Libra Sep 24 – Oct 22

Today brings both advantage and challenge. While luck supports you, misunderstandings may arise. You could feel criticized or hurt unfairly, so avoid reacting quickly and seek clarity before forming conclusions.

Scorpio Oct 23 – Nov 22

You may feel uneasy or doubtful today without clear reason. Subconscious fears could influence your mood. Avoid jumping to conclusions, as confusion is present, and situations may not be as they appear.

Sagittarius Nov 23 – Dec 22

Misunderstandings may arise with friends, partners, or children today. Social plans could also face confusion. Avoid taking things personally, as external factors or miscommunication may be influencing these situations.

Capricorn Dec 23 – Jan 20

Avoid making important decisions with authority figures today. Information may be unclear or misleading, whether intentional or not. Situations are not straightforward, so proceed cautiously and delay commitments for now.

Aquarius Jan 21 – Feb 19

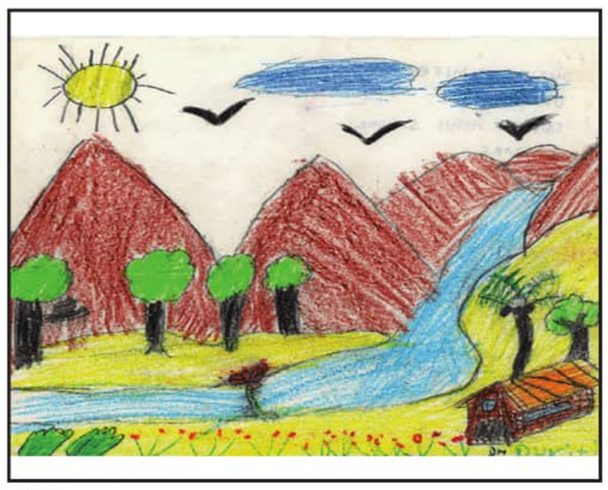
Steer clear of debates on sensitive topics today, as confusion and misinformation are widespread. People may hold incorrect beliefs, so avoid unnecessary conflict and approach discussions with caution and awareness.

Pisces Feb 20 – Mar 20

Avoid making decisions about shared finances, taxes, or joint assets today. You may lack complete or accurate information. Delay action, verify facts carefully, and avoid assumptions to prevent complications later.

www.sundeepkochar.com

KIDZONE



Dhirti, Bengaluru

Sanjana, Bengaluru

Kidzone, Bangalore Mirror, No. 74/2, Sanjana Plaza, 4th & 5th Floor, Elephant Rock Road, Jayanagar 3rd block, Bengaluru-560 011;
Please send hard copies of your artwork in A4 size only.

SOLUTIONS

SOLVE IN 1M

=[(√26+6)(√26 − 5)]^345
=[(√26)^2 − (5)^2]^345
=(26 − 25)^345
=(1)^345
=1

RIDDLER

Gerrnimo

STRIKE OUT

A	C	C	O	U	N	T		H	E	F	T	Y		
N		O		N		L	E	O	N	E		O		
C	A	N	A	S	T	A		E	N	D	E	D		
I		C		A		L		U				E		
E	V	E	R	Y		O	R	B	I	T	A	L		
N		A		C	H	E				W				
T	I	L	L	I	N	G		E	D	G	I	N	G	
I	N	D	U	L	G	E		A	L	P	H	A		R
N		N		S		L		R				N		
U	R	E	D	O		T	A	B	L	E	A	U		
R		R	U	B	L	E		U		S		L		
C	O	N	I	O	N		A	R	G	U	E		D	
O	N	I	O	N		A	C	H	E					
M	A	M	E	Y		D	E	M	E	S	N	E		
S	C	A	R	S		D	E	S						

FAST FIVE

K	E	E	L	S
C	O	N	I	C
O	N	I	O	N
C	O	N	I	C
S	C	A	R	S

BULL'S EYE

abate, abet, ABREAST, aster, barest, bast, baste, bate, beast, beat, best, beta, brat, breast, east, rate, rest, sate, seat, stab, star, stare, tear, tsar

QUICK

M		D		S		S		S		E				
C	O	G	E	N	T		G	A	R	D	E	N		
O		G		S		O		E		R				
O	L	D	G	U	A	R	D		H	E	F	T		
R		U		M		T		S						
L	I	M	B	S		R	O	T	U	N	D	A		
E				D		H				E				
C	H	O	I	C	E	S		A	D	D	L	E		
L				H		R		E		L				
S	K	U	A		C	R	A	C	K	P	O	T		
L		N		N		T		R						
B	O	T	A	N	Y		T	R	U	S	T	Y		
F		M		L		A		B		S				

STRIKE OUT

A	C	C	O	U	N	T		H	E	F	T	Y		
N		O		N		L	E	O	N	E		O		
C	A	N	A	S	T	A		E	N	D	E	D		
I		C		A		L		U				E		
E	V	E	R	Y		O	R	B	I	T	A	L		
N		A		C	H	E				W				
T	I	L	L	I	N	G		E	D	G	I	N	G	
I	N	D	U	L	G	E		A	L	P	H	A		R
N		N		S		L		R				N		
U	R	E	D	O		T	A	B	L	E	A	U		
R		R	U	B	L	E		U		S		L		
C	O	N	I	O	N		A	R	G	U	E		D	
O	N	I	O	N		A	C	H	E					
M	A	M	E	Y		D	E	M	E	S	N	E		
S	C	A	R	S		D	E	S						

SUDOKU

7	9	6	8	4	2	3	5	1
2	1	8	6	5	3	7	4	9
3	5	4	1	7	9	2	8	6
8	6	5	7	9	4	1	2	3
9	3	7	2	8	1	5	6	4
4	2	1	3	6	5	8	9	7
5	7	3	9	2	6	4	1	8
1	4	9	5	3	8	6	7	2
6	8	2	4	1	7	9	3	5

MENSA PUZZLE

Z. In rows, add the numerical value of left and centre letters to give the value of the right hand letter.

QUOTE UNCODE

As I grow older, I pay less attention to what men say. I just watch what they do.

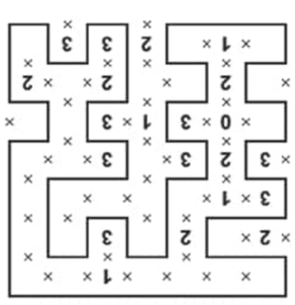
ALPHA TRIANGLE

D, Id, Din, Dine, Deign, Ending, Denying.

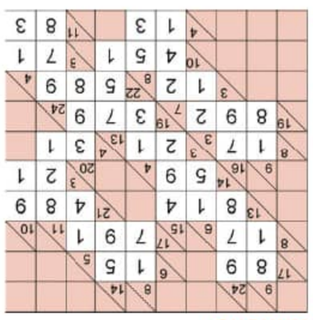
GO FIGURE

Easy
7 − 3 − 2 + 1 = 3
Medium
5 + 3 + 9 − 7 = 10
Hard
2 × 9 − 8 + 1 = 11

LOOP



KAKURO



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 # It is settled then
Actor and filmmaker Justin Baldoni is "ecstatic" following the settlement of the highly publicised legal dispute tied to 'It Ends With Us', according to his attorney Bryan Freedman

SANDALWOOD SHOTS
Y MAHESWARA REDDY

Epic story

Hotelier Pola Praveenkumar is debuting as a producer with the film Shikhandi that is scheduled for release on May 15.

The team organised an event on Tuesday to unveil the trailer and soundtrack. Shravanabelagola MLA CN Balakrishna and Sai Satish Doddaiah were the guests at the event.

"Gurumurthy has been in touch with me for two months. Then, he arranged for me to listen to a song from this movie. I agreed to support the film as soon as I heard the song, which was about Goddess Yellamma. I thank my family and the cast and crew. I am also playing a role in the movie," said Praveenkumar.

Gurumurthy said the movie is based on Shikhandi from the Hindu epic Mahabharata. "The title of the movie has generated curiosity among moviegoers. I thank producer Pola Praveenkumar for providing all amenities during the filming," said the director.

Ambition realised

The teaser and four songs of Vijay Raghavendra-starrer Srimati Sindhoora were released at SRV Preview Theater on Wednesday. The movie is supported by DN Nagi Reddy and directed by R Anantharaju. Nagi Reddy has also written its script.

"Srimati Sindhoor is my dream project. I nourished an ambition of supporting a movie for 20 years. I supported this movie to contribute something for the welfare of technicians and junior artistes. The song on Hanuman, sung by Kailash Kher, is the highlight of the movie," said Nagi Reddy.

"The movie is about a responsible young man who gets married to his lover. What happens to the couple is what forms the plot of this family entertainer," he said.

He said that he wanted to make a movie with Power Star Puneeth Rajkumar but he could not do it. "I am happy to have Vijay Raghavendra on the board," he said.

Vijay Raghavendra said the movie will be different from other movies that are being screened. "I am sure audiences will give preference to this movie because it is timeless. Graphics in the movie are a visual treat," he said.

SHOW STOPPERS STOP FOR A BITE

B'luru eatery owner recalls time crowd of fans created traffic jam during Anushka-Virat's visit

Anushka Sharma and Virat Kohli are called a power couple for a reason and together, they enjoy a huge fan following. Anushka has a strong connect with Bengaluru, living a large part of her life there. Recently, Ganesh Poojari, director of Bengaluru's iconic eatery Central Tiffin Room, opened up about memorable visits by the stars.

Ganesh recalled the chaos that followed Virat and Anushka's visit to the restaurant in 2023. He shared that he initially dismissed the calls informing him about their arrival, assuming they were fake. He said in an interview with Pinkvilla Biz, "I thought that it was 'fake'," he said, adding that despite repeated calls from their "local reference who manages VIP movement," he believed it was merely "hype."

He further revealed that even after multiple updates, he remained unconvinced until the couple actually arrived. "I got a final call saying they are actually here at the corner, and have come in two cars. I still thought it was not real and after that, two cars came outside the entrance," he recalled. The restaurant then cleared an entire floor to make the couple and their families comfortable.

Ganesh described Anushka as "very good to talk to" and shared that when asked how she knew about the restaurant, the actor fondly remembered visiting it during her college days. "She couldn't recollect the last time. She said it was a while ago and now, 'I have come with my family and husband. We don't have time, but we have come. We have been craving for so long so we actually had to make time'," he said.

He said that outside the restaurant, the entire road was blocked. "No vehicles could pass and there were people madly waiting for the couple to exit. When we opened the doors, they couldn't even get inside the car."

Following the incident, the restaurant even received a call from the local police station asking them to notify authorities in advance whenever high-profile celebrities visited. —ETimes

Nora submits apology over song

Actor Nora Fatehi appeared before the National Commission for Women in connection with the controversy surrounding the song Sarke Chunar from the film KD: The Devil. Summoned by the Commission over the matter, the actor submitted a written apology during her appearance.

Fatehi said, "I have submitted my apology to the Commission. It was not my intention to offend anybody. I have to be responsible as an artist. I have decided to sponsor the education for a few orphan girls." Her appearance before the Commission comes days after actor Sanjay Dutt attended a hearing on April 27 in the same case. During the proceedings, Dutt apologised to the Commission and pledged to sponsor the education of 50 tribal girl children as part of an initiative supporting social welfare.

Sarke Chunar Teri Sarke had faced criticism for its allegedly objectionable lyrics and choreography. — ETimes

The Saif-SRK connection

Saif Ali Khan's crime drama 'Kartavya' is preparing for its digital premiere. He essays the role of a police officer caught in a difficult situation when his family is put at risk. Speaking about his association with

Shah Rukh Khan's production house, Saif revealed that the superstar encourages directors to take full creative charge of their films.

In a conversation with News18, Saif said Shah Rukh personally approached him for 'Kartavya' and urged him to hear the script. "I've had a lovely and long association with Shah Rukh. He's someone I look up to in many, many ways. I had a short meeting with him," he said.

"He said that there's a lovely script and he would like me to hear it and do the film. I went through the process and meeting the director (Pulkit). Once we finished the shoot and Shah Rukh watched it, he said it's a lovely film. That was pretty much the limit of my interaction with him. I didn't meet him on set because he's one of the producers who believes that a director is free to operate and make the film that he wants to make."
— ETimes

Anne Hathaway wasn't the first choice for role

Actor Anne Hathaway has revealed that she was not the first choice to play Andy Sachs in the 2006 hit film 'The Devil Wears Prada', joking that several other actresses were initially considered for the role, People reported.

In an interview with co-star Emily Blunt, the Oscar-winning actor said she was "actually the ninth choice" for the character. "I wasn't the first choice to play Andy Sachs," Hathaway said. "I was actually the ninth choice."

Hathaway said she could name the other choices. "They're tattooed on my brain all these years later." "It was kind of amazing, because I'm like, 'Why is everyone turning down this amazing part in this amazing movie?' I couldn't figure it out. So now I like to, you know, kid myself and think that it was like some kind of destiny," she added. — ANI